



Blackwork Journey Blog

September 2017

Pina

The Philippine Cloth of Pride, Endurance & Passion
July 7, 2017 to May 4, 2018



Allium

I'm not much of a gardener and had never come across an Allium before seeing this embroidery design by Elizabeth Almond of blackworkjourney.co.uk. The design attracted me straight away, and the idea of an ornamental onion made me laugh (it's the little things) so I decided to have a go. Since coming across this design I've been spotting Alliums everywhere, including a couple of doors down from me! I think they look like pompoms.



Starting I realised that the design includes stem stitch, lazy daisies and colonial knots, none of which I'm fond of, but with practice through this pattern I've improved all three techniques. I'm still not convinced by metallic threads though...





Taking nearly a month off in July/August has meant that I have been playing 'catch up' but it has also given me an opportunity to take stock of the direction I want to move Blackwork Journey in for the next year or so.

I have finalised my visit to Poland and Kenya and look forward to meeting and working with new groups in 2018.

Vicky, the Chairman on the Nairobi branch of the Embroiderers' Guild came for a flying visit which was wonderful. Next time I meet her will be in Kenya!

Meeting new people in all parts of the world was an unexpected bonus of running Blackwork Journey and I have made many new friends as a result.

Vicky Cole, Chairman Nairobi Embroiderers' Guild and me!

'Sublime Stitches' Part 9 Evenweave and Aida and Sampler 9

The design is in its ninth month and I really don't know where 2017 has gone! The number of pictures of the two versions that are coming into Facebook show just how creative Blackwork Journey readers are!

To see the colour variations and the different ways in which the pattern has been adapted is really interesting and very helpful for new readers just starting and who may not be quite so confident, especially with colour. Whilst I generally use DMC or Anchor threads which are available worldwide, I used Threadworx floss for **Sampler 10** which is based on Part 10 of 'Sublime Stitches'.

Three shades of thread are needed for this design - dark, medium, metallic. Threadworx floss was used, but Anchor or DMC can be used as an alternative.

Threadworx TWX-01024 Deep sea blue, one skein

Threadworx TWX-00138 Mosaic, one skein

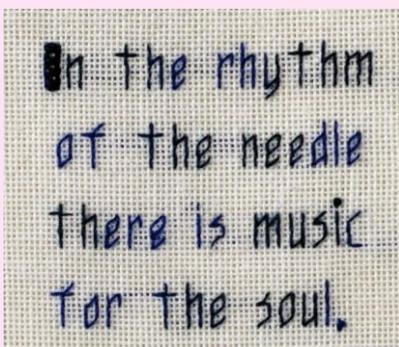
DMC Cotton P rle No.12, white, one ball

DMC Light Effects metallic E415 Pewter, one skein

Mill Hill glass beads 2022 silver, one packet

Threadworx 00138 Mosaic and TWX-01024 Deep sea blue





CH0362 Sampler 9

*In the rhythm
of the needle
there is music
for the soul.*

A verse that is appropriate to the needlewoman regardless of nationality or religion. Needlework crosses all boundaries and all cultures and unites and supports people worldwide!



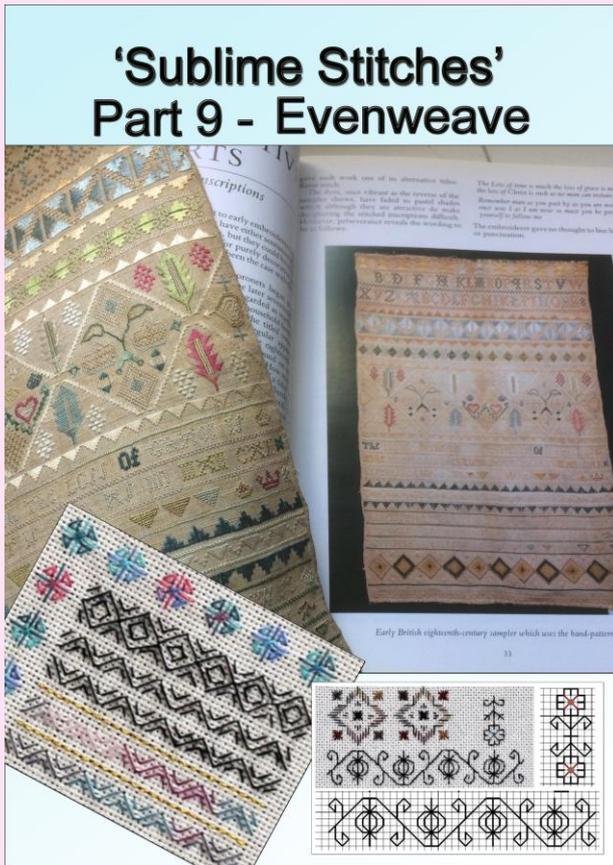
CHO346 Elegance by Vitoria



'Pandora's Box' by Angelica S

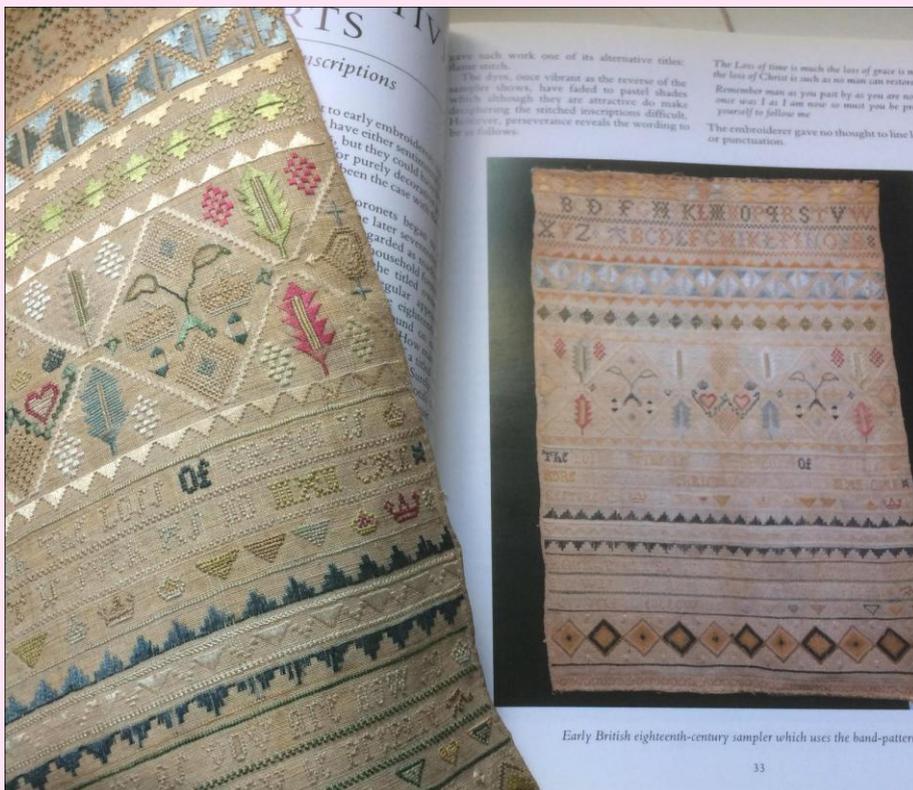
Work in progress Madeleine and Ana

Many versions of 'Sublime Stitches' have been uploaded to the Facebook group and to see all the different ways of working the same design is really interesting for me as the designer. I have seen colour combinations I would never have thought of using and this impacts on the way I feel about colour and design and will no doubt, influence my work in the future.



Part 9 evenweave and Part 9 Aida can be found in 'Freebies' on the site

A strange coincidence?



In my collection of samplers is a one worked in the 1700's. I purchased it at a craft show for a few pounds, but was delighted to find the exact sampler had been photographed and written about in The Embroiderers Guild book 'Making Samplers'.

It is worked in silk on a linen background with alphabets, inscriptions, motifs and patterns as a band sampler. The stitches are tiny and very detailed and whilst the colours have faded over the years, it is still a piece of great beauty and interest.

Originally, it was much longer, but has been chopped up into a shorter length. It contains two areas of embroidery representing holly and



a leaf and berry spray similar to mistletoe.

'A Schole-house for the Needle' published in 1624 included motifs of a holly leaf and a holly leaf with berry spray.

Some of the stitches used on the sampler:
Algerian eyelet, Satin, Tent, Back stitch, Florentine and Cross stitch

I took some of the patterns from this old sampler and reproduced them in 'Sublime Stitches' so that the original sampler would live on into the 21st century.

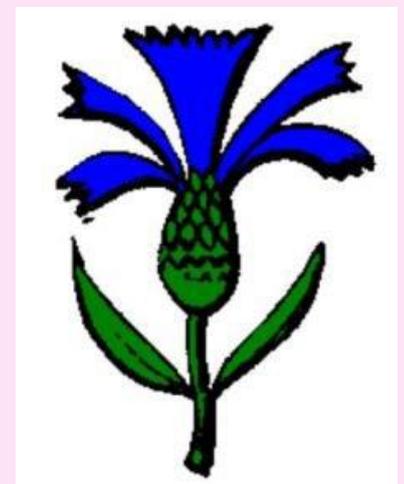
Cross stitch flowers appear in samplers throughout the ages, from early ones which are collected and admired to the traditional pattern books which were used by embroiderers looking to enhance their embroidery.

Stylised flowers and plants dominated the 17th century band samplers often in repeating wave like patterns. Carnations and gillyflowers were often used because needlewomen were familiar with them.

An old recipe for gillyflower wine is mentioned in the *Cornish Recipes Ancient & Modern* dated to 1753: "To 3 gallons water put 6lbs of the best powder sugar; boil together for the space of 1/2 an hour; keep skimming; let it stand to cool. Beet up 3 ounces of syrup of betony, with a large spoonful of ale yeast, put into liquor & brew it well; put a peck of gillyflowers free of stalks; let work fore 3 days covered with a cloth; strain & cask for 3-4 weeks, then bottle."



The Gillyflower received its flower symbolism during Crusades and the heyday of heraldry. Page of Gillofers (gillyflowers - carnations and pinks) from Henry Lyte's A niewe Herball of 1578,



Of Gillofers. Chap. viij.

The Kynde.

Under the name of Gillofers (at this time) diuerse sortes of floures are contained. Wherof they call the first the Cloue gillofer whiche in deede is of diuerse sortes & variable colours: the other is the small or single Gillofer & his kinde. The third is that, which we cal in English sweete Williams, & Colminiers: wherunto we may well ioyne the wilde Gillofer or Cockow floure, which is not much vnlike the smaller sort of garden Gillofers.

Vetonica altilis.

Carnations, and the double cloau Gillofers.

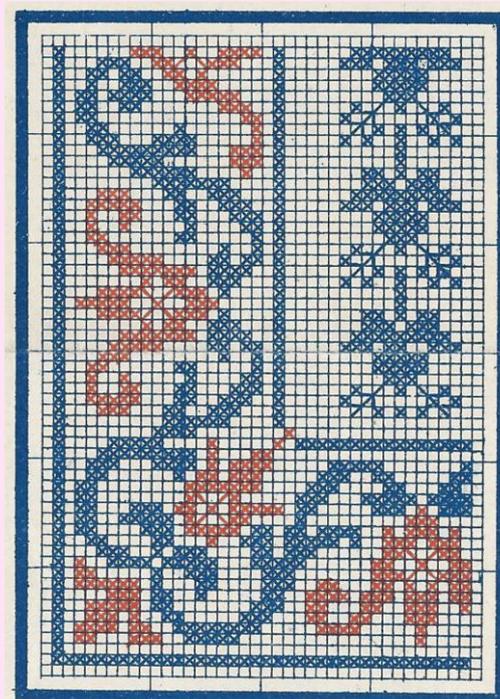
Vetonica altilis minor.

The single Gillofers, Soppes in wine, and Pinkes, &c.

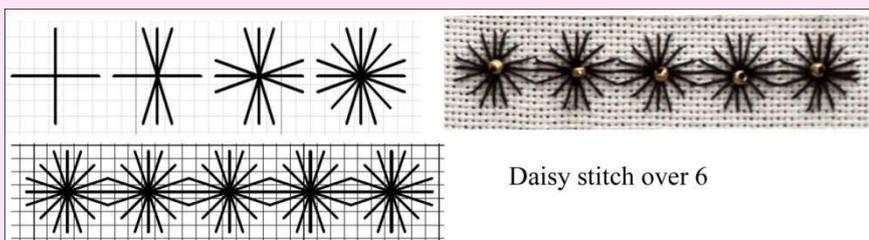


The Description.

The Cloue gillofer hath long small blades, almost like Leeke blades. The Calke is round, and of a foote and halfe long, full of ioyntes and knops, & it beareth



Old cross stitch pattern books also use flowers in bands and border. This is taken from an old German cross stitch book.



Daisy stitch over 6

Technique: Embroidery Threads; DMC 310, one strand. Count carefully!

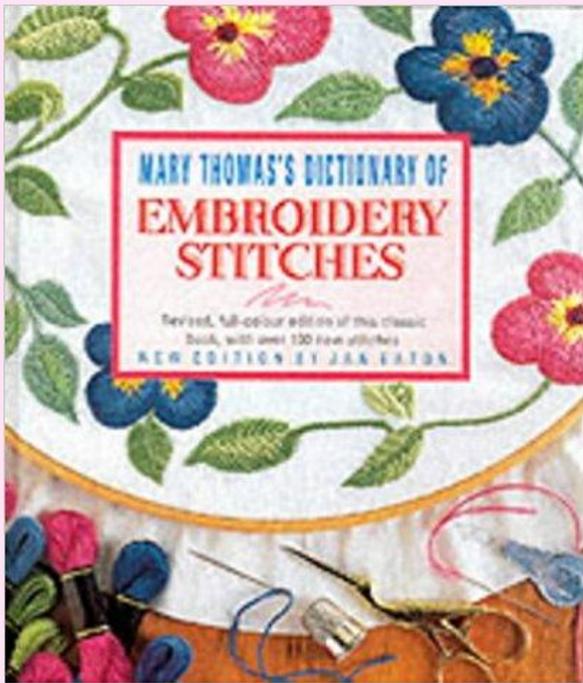
An embroidery stitch introduced into Part 9 is daisy stitch, worked over twelve threads or six blocks. The long stitches are worked from the outside to the centre creating a small hole. Add a bead to the centre once the embroidery has been completed.

An alternative method for working this stitch is by using eight long stitches worked diagonally and crossing in the middle. In this case a bead would not be added.

Note:

Many embroidery stitches are referred to by more than one name which can be very confusing. I use Mary Thomas's 'Dictionary of Embroidery Stitches' as my guide when naming stitches.

"Make yourself a sampler, working each stitch with care until you have perfected it and could use it with confidence on any piece of work. As the sampler grows, it will form a record of your progress and can also be referred to for the worked effect of any stitch."



In her book the stitches are grouped suggesting how they might be used. The stitches grouped under "Outline Stitches" are suitable for outlines and those under "Border and Band Stitches" suitable for borders etc.

I have collected many books on stitches over the years and frequently return to this one. First published in 1934, Mary Thomas's book has long been a favourite of novice and experienced embroiderers alike.

It was updated recently by Jan Eaton and describes over 400 embroidery stitches from simple to complex detached-filing and pulled-fabric stitches.

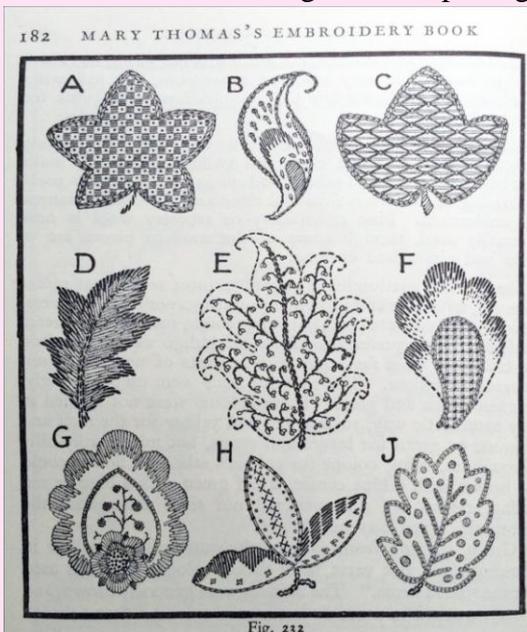
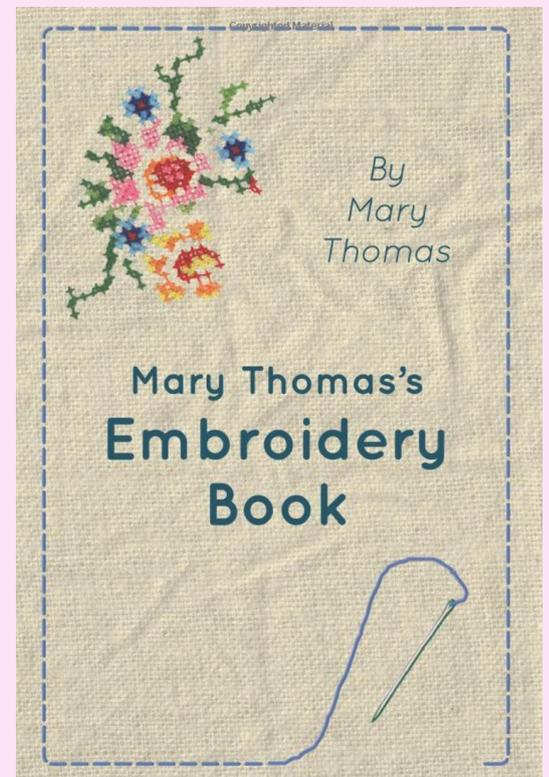
It is available from Amazon and the original can often be found in eBay for a few pounds.

Mary Thomas's companion book "Mary Thomas's Embroidery Book" was printed in 1936

In this book she looks at the different types of embroidery and groups them with detailed explanations.

Cross stitch, for example, lists the countries where it is used, Materials and Threads, Design and Colour, Method of work, Technique, Variations of Cross Stitch, Cross stitch allied with Holbein stitch and Voiding.

Whilst I could buy new copies of the books, I gain great pleasure from referring to my own books where previous owners have written notes in the margins. I know they have been well used and loved and whilst the diagrams and photographs are in black and white, they are clear and easy to read.



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Fig.232 shows nine different flower petals with detailed explanations of the stitches used.

For example: A - Rose in long and short stitch, couched filling for centre outlined with chain stitch.

The beginner is able to see the shape and how the stitches are applied.



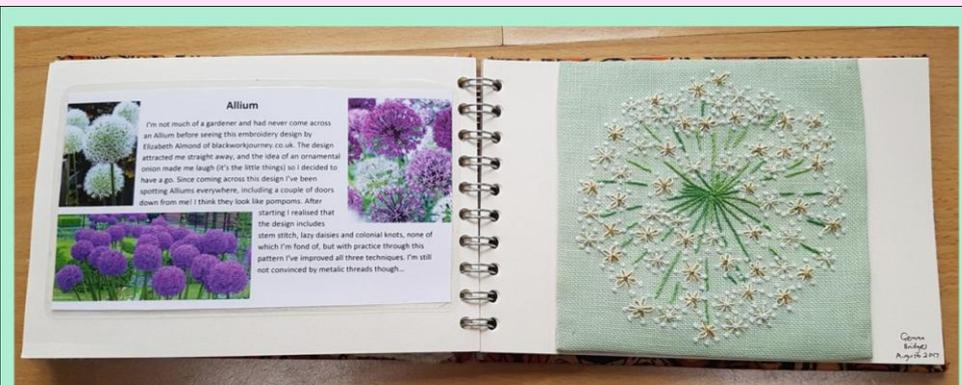
Travelling Books

Embroiderers' Guild Activity for Branches and Individual Members
Books seem to be featuring a lot in this month's Blog.

Within a branch small groups of branch members join together to produce a unique book for each member of the group. The books created by the groups are called "Travelling Books" simply because they travel round the group. Each member of the group makes a unique contribution to the book circulated by each member. The result is always very special - a book each participating member keeps at the end of the journey and often shares with others for pleasure and inspiration.

Gemma Bridges - Travelling Book

Gemma posted some picture on the Facebook group of her travelling book which she is compiling with her group of about 16 members. I thought it was an excellent and different way of using embroidery and thought you would appreciate her input.



Allium

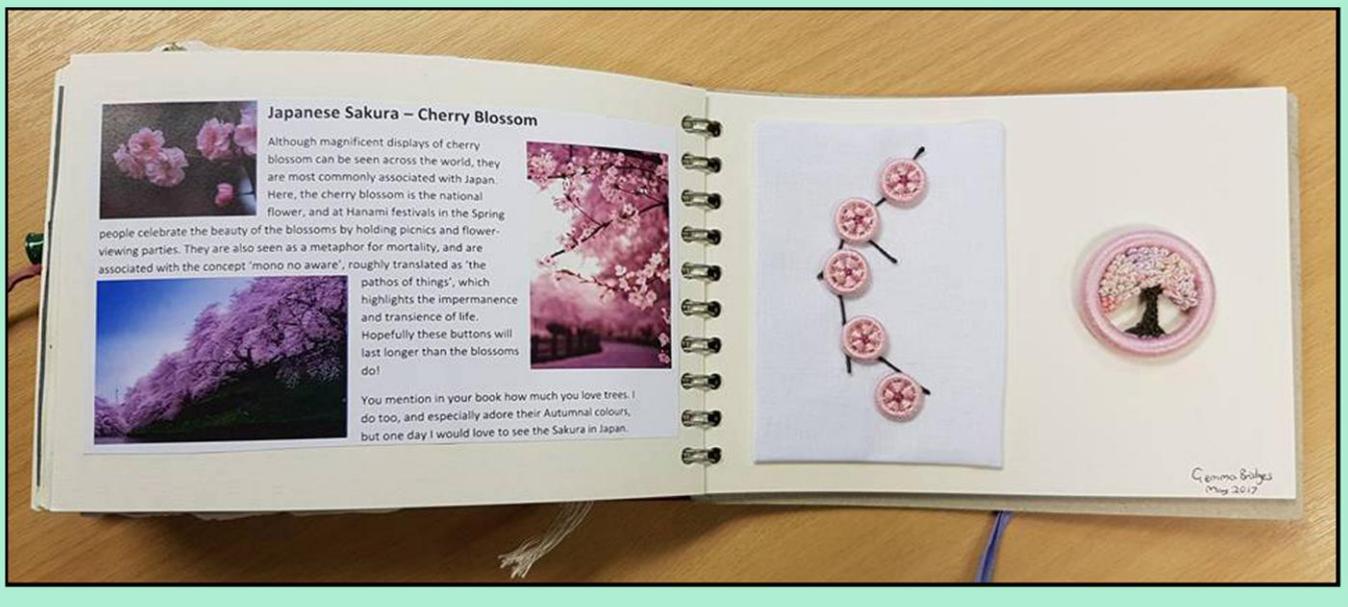
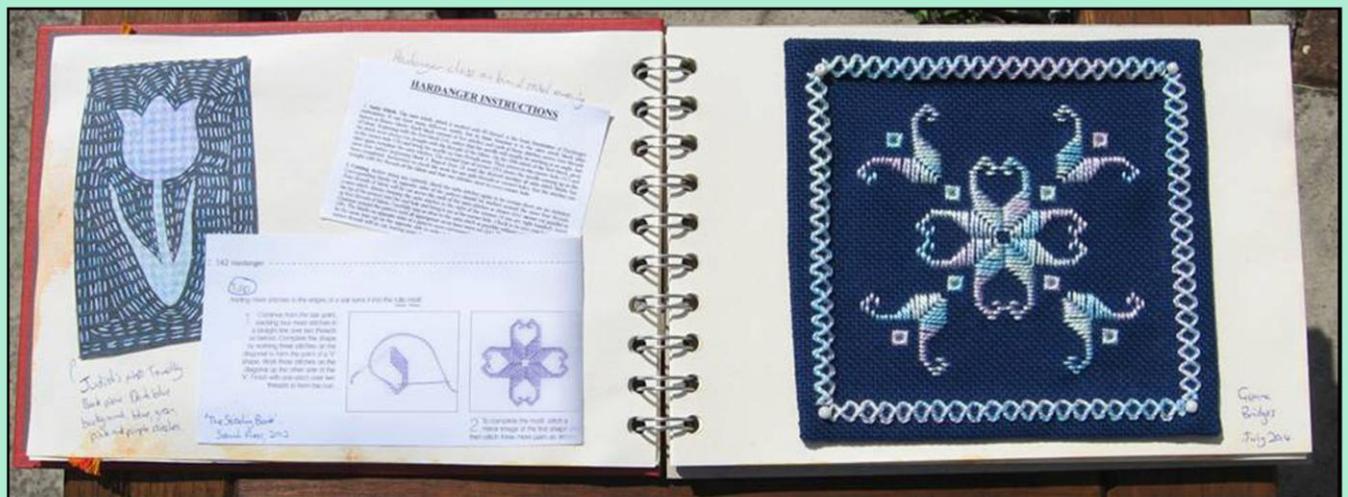
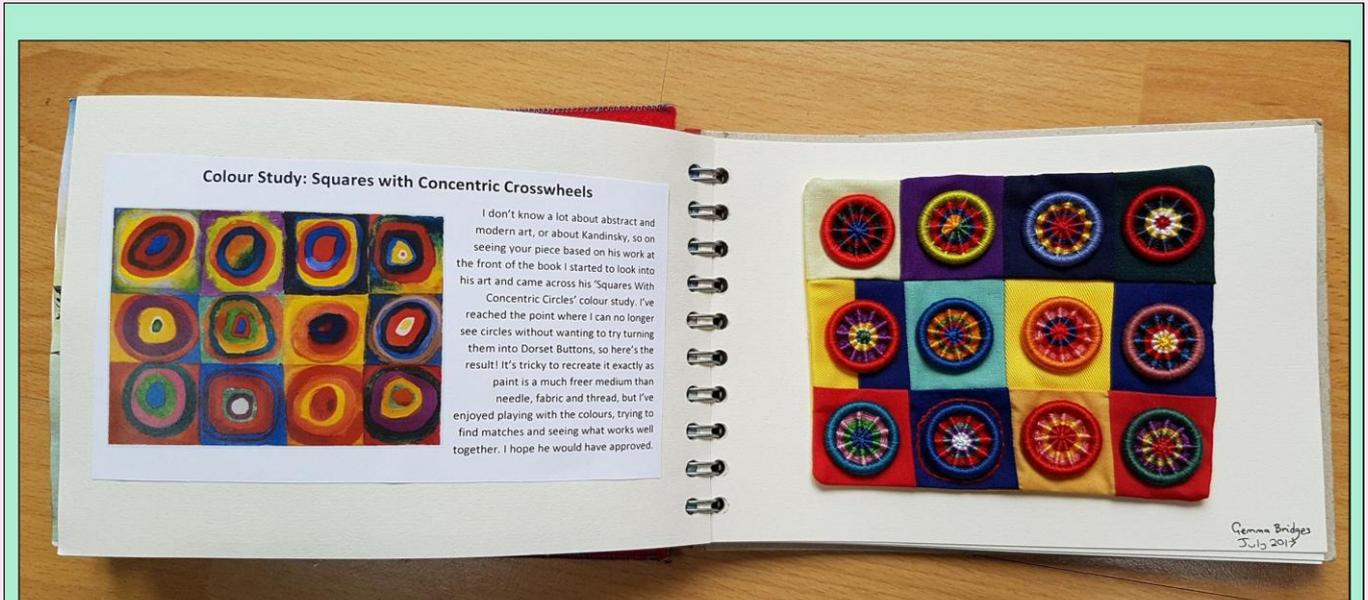
I'm not much of a gardener and had never come across an Allium before seeing this embroidery design by Elizabeth Almond of blackworkjourney.co.uk. The design attracted me straight away and the idea of an ornamental onion made me laugh (it's the little things). So I decided to have a go. Since coming across this design I have been spotting alliums everywhere, including a couple of doors down from me. I think they look like pompoms.

After starting, I realised the embroidery includes stem stitch, lazy daisies and Colonial knots, none of which I am fond of but with practice through this pattern, I have improved all three techniques. I'm still not convinced by metallic thread though....

Gemma

Thank you for sharing your lovely work Gemma!





Handmade Dorset buttons feature in two of the pages of Gemma's book

Gemma's Guild branch has been running the project for several years. 'Autumn Leaves' appeared in 'Stitch' Magazine last year and Gemma was thrilled. As she says, she can't claim credit for the original idea, but loves seeing how the Branch has interpreted it and the beautiful work produced in response.

If you have a similar story please let me know!



PR0029 Allium - a free style embroidery design

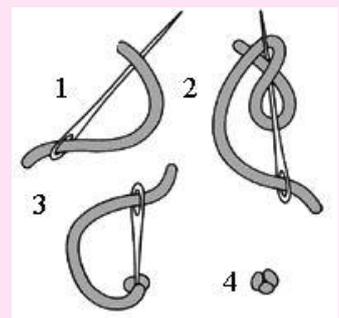
This chart can be found in 'Projects' in Blackwork Journey if you want to create your own flower garden.

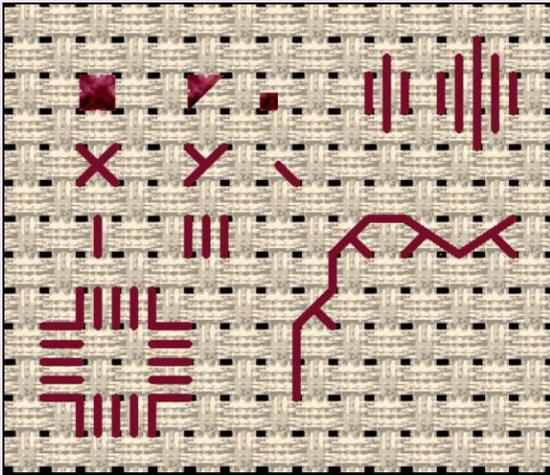
Alliums, also known as ornamental onions, are grown for their showy flower heads, which come in wide range of sizes and shades of blue, purple, white and yellow. Even when the plants die back, the dried flower heads look attractive in the garden, or can be cut for indoor display.



Draw the design onto the fabric using water soluble pen or an HB pencil. Colonial knots are more effective than French knots.

Colonial knot





Splitting blocks on Aida Fabric

There may be a number of times when you need to split a box if you are using Aida fabric and none of them are easy, but it can be done!

If the edge of the pattern is not regular you may need to add compensating stitches to complete the outline.

Pattern darning on Aida means splitting blocks. Quarter and half cross stitches require small stitches to complete them and Hardanger Kloster blocks on Aida need to be split.

Use a sharp needle and try to be as neat and careful as possible. Some patterns work full cross stitches then add the backstitch over the cross. This can be bulky and untidy. I prefer to add small compensating stitches. To fill small diamonds add a vertical cross stitch rather than four small diagonal stitches.



Some of the samplers based on 'Sublime Stitches'

I have stitched a number of designs over the years relating to the free projects and have been wondering what to do with them. After much pondering, I think I am going to join some of them together to make a wall hanging rather than framing them.

The LACIS Museum, Berkeley, California

Piña
The Philippine Cloth of Pride, Endurance & Passion
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I spent a very enjoyable few hours looking at the wonderful Piña Exhibition being held at the museum, taking photographs and talking to Jules Kliot who established the Museum with his late wife. They have made a significant contribution to the world of textiles in California and beyond and it was a joy to meet such an knowledgeable and enthusiastic individual.

I had intended to post the pictures of the embroideries in the Blog, but have decided to put together an 'Inspirations' pdf on Piña with all the photographs and information in one place.

I hope to add this to the site in November. The collection of embroideries is unique with many fine examples which have never been seen before in one place.



Jules Kliot, Director and Catherine Ljungquist, who looked after all my needlework needs in San Francisco!

The Lacis Museum Newsletter July 27, 2017

With most activities focused on and with the Piña exhibit, awakening visitors to the amazing skill and talents of the human hand that this evidence of the past demonstrates, a most delightful interruption occurred with a visit by **Elizabeth Almond** from England arriving as a guest of our friend **Catherine Ljungquist**.

Introducing herself as an embroiderer with a strong love of and focus on Blackwork, Elizabeth released from her small bag some of the most exquisite needlework that I have assumed was only in the past, the finest worked by Elizabeth with a single strand of embroidery floss. It is obvious that the human spirit devoted to excellence in hand skills is still with us.

Hopefully, she will share her talents in a future workshop at LMLT. Some of her work can be seen on her web site: blackworkjourney.co.uk.



Delicate Piña embroidery

I hope you have enjoyed this month's Blog. Thank you to all the readers who contribute ideas and photographs of their work.

If you have any queries please contact:
lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk

Happy stitching!

Liz

